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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

SUGAR BEETS

Edited by Prof J. C. Hogenson.

A NATION HUNGRY FOR SUGAR

Uncle Sam has a big sweet tooth.

We Yankees consume nearly four hundred thousand tons of beet sugar every year, and still are hungry enough to buy three million tons more from Europe. This is not all beet sugar, but it is sugar and costs millions.

We have sixty-seven sugar-beet factories working three months each year, grinding, boiling, and squeezing the sugar out of nearly forty thousand tons of beets every working day, but this does not near fill our wants.

These facts are encouraging to beetgrowers-or ought to be.

The first refined beet-root sugar produced in commercial quantity was made about one hundred years ago, at a cost of approximately 80 cents a pound. The cost of producing cane sugar was then somewhat higher than that of beet sugar.

The amount of raw sugar extracted from the beet at that time varied from 4 to 6 per cent, and the amount of refined sugar obtained was from 1 to 2 per cent of the weight of the beet.

The cost of producing an acre of beets was estimated at approximately \$35, while the yield was from 6 to 25 tons per acre.

The advances that have been made in cultural methods have been offset to a very great extent by the increased cost of labor in the United States, so that the actual reduction in the cost of producing beet sugar has been due to the improvement of the beet or to less expensive operations in extracting and refining the product.

Thorough cultivation is another factor in producing good sugar beets. It is a common saying among the Germans that "the sugar must be hoed into the beet."

In no time of its life should a sugar beet be allowed to stop growing, for if it once becomes stunted it is doubtful whether it will ever make as good a beet as it would have been under conditions of continuous growth.

Another wa the beet has been improved is by increasing its sugar content. This has been done without increasing the size of the beet.

If a largely increased yield of beets is combined with a much higher sugar content it is entirely possible to obtain three times as much sugar per acre as is produced on an average at the present time.

Yields of more than 30 tons of beets per acre are sometimes obtained, and yields of more than 20 tons are com-

From 20 to 25 per cent of the sugar in the beet has been reported so frequently that it is safe to assume that an average sugar content of 18 per cent is within the limits of possibility.

If an average yield of 20 tons per acre and an average sugar content of 18 per cent could be reached, we would have an average yield of 7,200 pounds of sugar per acre.

Clay loams are very satisfactory for sugar-beet production, provided other conditions are favorable; but more depends upon the physical condition of the soil and upon methods of cultivation than upon the particular kind or variety of soil used. The soil, however, should be well supplied with humus and well drained.

During the past few years there has been a remarkable advance in the price of farming lands, especially in those localities where beet-sugar factories are in successful operation.

Five years ago the land in Cache Valley, Utah, was offered for sale at \$20 an acre. Since that time two sugar factories have been built and from 10,000 to 12,000 acres of sugar beets are grown in that valley annually, bringing to the owners a return of \$75 and upward per acre.

As a result practically none of the land is for sale at the present time. If by force of circumstances a tract of this land changes hands, the price paid is more than \$100 per acre.

In some parts of Colorado sugar beets, potatoes and alfalfa form a rotation series to which small grains are sometimes added.

When it is realized that potatoes often yield from 600 to 800 bushels per acre, and sugar beets upward of 20 tons per acre, it is not surprising that this land is held at several hundred dollars per acre.

The production of single-germ beet seed is but a method of thinning beets before the seed is planted. Commer-